

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TEL AV 02222 301300Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04
H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01
SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15 IO-13 OMB-01 SSM-05 MCT-01
DHA-02 EB-08 ACDA-10 /127 W
-----310543Z 051293 /17

R 301153Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5477
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO

UNCLAS TEL AVIV 2222

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, PINS, IS, GR
SUBJECT: FIVE PFLP TERRORISTS UP FOR TRIAL IN ISRAEL

1. THREE ARABS AND TWO WEST GERMANS, ALL SAID TO HAVE BEEN MEMBERS OF A TERRORISTS GROUP WITH THE POPULAR FRONT FOR THE LIBERATION OF PALESTINE (PFLP), ARE TO GO ON TRIAL IN ISRAEL SOON, ACCORDING TO A GOVERNMENT PRESS BULLETIN ISSUED MARCH 29, 1977. TEXT OF BULLETIN FOLLOWS:

1. BEGIN TEXT.
IN JANUARY, 1976, AN ATTEMPT BY A BAND OF THE POPULAR FRONT TERRORIST ORGANIZATION TO HIT AN EL AL PLANE WITH MORE THAN 100 PASSENGERS ABOARD BY MEANS OF GROUND TO AIR MISSILES, AND TO BRING THE PLANE DOWN, WAS FOILED. THE ATTEMPT WAS TO HAVE BEEN MADE AS THE PLANE WAS ABOUT TO LAND AT AN AIRPORT OUTSIDE THE BORDERS OF ISRAEL. THE FIVE TERRORISTS WHO SOUGHT TO HIT THE PLANE WERE CAPTURED, AMONG THEM A YOUNG MAN
UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 TEL AV 02222 301300Z

AND WOMAN WHO ARE CITIZENS OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY, AND THE OTHER THREE ARAB TERRORISTS. THE FIVE HAVE BEEN HELD IN CUSTODY IN ISRAEL SINCE JANUARY OF 1976. THE TRIAL OF THE MEMBERS OF THE BAND IS TO OPEN IN THE NEAR FUTURE. IT WILL BE BEFORE A MILITARY COURT WHICH WILL SIT BEHIND CLOSED DOORS. SECURITY AUTHORITIES IN ISRAEL, IN COORDINATION WITH THE ISRAEL BAR ASSOCIATION,

HAVE PROVIDED FOR THE DEFENSE OF THE ACCUSED BY ISRAELI ATTORNEYS WHO ARE AUTHORIZED TO APPEAR BEFORE MILITARY COURTS. NOTIFICATION OF THE ARRESTS WAS MADE TO THE GERMAN AUTHORITIES, AS WELL AS TO THE FAMILIES OF THE GERMAN MAN AND WOMAN. THE FAMILIES WERE INFORMED THAT THEY WILL BE PERMITTED TO MEET WITH THEM IF THEY WISH, AND THEY WILL COME FOR THIS PURPOSE TO ISRAEL. A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE GERMAN EMBASSY IN ISRAEL HAS MET WITH THE GERMAN NATIONALS, AT THE REQUEST OF HIS GOVERNMENT. IN CONSIDERATION OF THE NECESSITY TO MAINTAIN SECRECY ON THE MEANS OF COMBATTING TERROR AND SABOTAGE, NO FURTHER DETAILS CAN BE GIVEN AT THIS TIME.

END TEXT.

3. PRESS REPORTS MARCH 30 CITED INFORMED SOURCES AT THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE AS EXPLAINING THAT THE GOVERNMENT STATEMENT WAS ISSUED BECAUSE "HOSTILE ELEMENTS" WERE EXPECTED TO PUBLISH DETAILS SHORTLY. THE PRESS ALSO POINTED OUT THAT THE LONDON DAILY EXPRESS HAD PUBLISHED A STORY JULY 5, 1976, WHICH SAID THAT KENYA HAD TURNED THE TERRORISTS OVER TO ISRAEL, A STORY WHICH AT THE TIME DREW A DENIAL FROM THE ISRAELI FOREIGN MINISTRY.

4. ACCORDING TO MAARIV AND YEDIOT AHARONOT, THE GERMANS, IDENTIFIED AS 22-YEAR-OLD BRIGITTA SCHULTZ AND 24-YEAR-OLD THOMAS REUTER, WERE ARRESTED IN KENYA WHEN THEY MADE INQUIRIES ABOUT THE THREE ARABS WHO HAD BEEN CAPTURED, ARMED WITH ANTI-AIRCRAFT WEAPONS, AT THE AIRPORT

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PAGE 03 TEL AV 02222 301300Z

PERIMETER FENCE IN NAIROBI. THE GERMANS, ALSO SAID TO BE MEMBERS OF THE BADER-MEINHOF GANG, ALLEGEDLY WERE CARRYING INSTRUCTIONS FOR A SUBSEQUENT ATTACK ON A U.S., FRENCH, GERMAN, OR BRITISH AIRLINER AT NAIROBI IF AN EL AL PLANE COULD NOT BE ATTACKED. THE ARABS REPORTEDLY ARE MEMBERS OF THE WADI HADAD PFLP GROUP.

5. HAARETZ STATES THAT THIS IS NOT THE FIRST TIME THAT A NON-ARAB TERRORIST HAD BEEN BROUGHT BACK TO ISRAEL FOR TRIAL, NOTING THAT ON ONE OCCASION A TURKISH CITIZEN HAD BEEN CAPTURED IN AN IDF RAID ON AN AL FATAH CAMP IN NORTHERN LEBANON.

5. THE GERMAN AMBASSADOR TO ISRAEL, PER FISCHER, TOLD THE JERUSALEM POST THAT "WE HAVE MADE OUR POSITION KNOWN TO THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT," WITHOUT SAYING WHAT IT WAS. HE SAID THAT HE HAD LEARNED OF THE DETENTION SOME TIME AGO.

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